

DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
April 21, 2005

*Sent by wire to K.B.  
M, W. 11/6*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday - November 7, 1969 - 10:00 a.m.

~~SECRET~~

~~FOR TONY LAKE - EYES ONLY - HIGHEST PRIORITY~~

FROM: Roger Morris

SUBJECT: Biafra Initiatives

Following is pour memoire on our tel con just completed:

1. As regards proposed Presidential statement condemning Biafrans for failure our relief initiative, I understand that Secretary Rogers is against such statement. Am told he argues (a) undesirable have President admit failure in public, (b) statement unnecessary in light low-level domestic concern, and (c) statement merely another step in undesirable involvement in problem. Under Secretary Richardson said to feel strongly, however, that statement necessary both to appease Federals and pre-empt domestic critics, particularly in light recent Ojukwu speech, which Secretary may not have seen. In any case, my proposal for Richardson rather than Presidential statement is strictly internal staff. State continues to assume issue is yes or no on Presidential statement as they submitted it.

2. Regarding political probe, Richardson had received Secretary's approval last weekend on memorandum recommending peace probe along lines discussed Richardson-Kissinger in accord President's decision of September 12. You will recall that, for tactical reasons, Secretary never given directly President's September 12 decision, and matter left for Richardson to handle internally at State. Secretary now reportedly concerned, despite his prior approval Richardson's recommendations, that we are becoming "involved" in political matters.

3. Operational consequences this turn-around:

(a) Richardson to see British and French, but with diluted brief of no significance in pushing forward probe;

(b) State overnight cancelled Richardson meeting with Biafran number two man in London this weekend, at which we were to make serious high-level probe vital questions of Biafran negotiating position. Bureaucratically, despite Watts-Eliot directive of September 9 specifically asking White House clearance all Nigerian policy cables (and Colorado Springs directive), these operational instructions to Richardson went out without, repeat without, White House clearance.

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(2)

Recommendation :

That HAK discuss directly with Secretary Rogers the President's September 12 directive to pursue an active peace probe to help end Nigerian civil war.